A PLAN

FOR

AFFORDING RELIEF TO THE INDIGENT BLIND.

THEY, who have always enjoyed the invaluable bleſſing of ſight, can underſtand the greatneſs of its loſs only by reflection: and yet it may eaſily be imagined, that the condition of blindneſs, even when accompanied with all the comforts and conveniences of affluence, is truly melancholy; how ſevere then muſt be its diſtreſſes, when aſſociated with POVERTY! But even this complicated misfortune, like all other calamities which befall our nature, admits of alleviation: it is the duty therefore, of all who can, to alleviate it; for it is the duty of all to do all poſſible good:—not to mention the ſublime pleaſure which will reſult to the mind from gratifying its benevolence towards this unfortunate and neglected claſs of our fellow-creatures.

Three objects are to be aimed at in affording relief to the blind poor:

Firſt, To furniſh them with ſome employment, which may prevent them from being burdens to *their family and the community*, or at leaſt, render them leſs burdenſome:

And, *Secondly*, That the employment be ſuch, as gently to engage the mind without fatiguing it, and by diverting the attention of the blind from their unhappy lot, make them leſs a burden *to themſelves*:

And, *Laſtly*, that they be ſupplied with ſuch a portion of religious knowledge, as may reconcile them to their ſituation, and teach them to be eaſy and contented;—and to this end, that they may be made acquainted with thoſe parts of the Chriſtian ſcheme in particular, which are beſt adapted to afford them conſolation.

To anſwer theſe three views, a ſchool will be opened, in which they will be inſtructed in muſic, that they may be enabled to become organiſts, and to teach muſic, if they are found capable of learning it; and *all* will be taught either the art of making whips, or ſome branch of the Cotton or Line manufactory, &c.—And laſtly they will be taught their prayers, and inſtructed in the doctrines and duties of Chriſtianity every Saturday.

As many may be diſqualified by age, infirmity, &c. from learning any of theſe arts, or from receiving any benefit from the Inſtitution,—it is propoſed to afford *them* ſome pecuniary aſſiſtance; in the diſtribution of which attention will be paid to the moral character of the objects.

When the pupils have learnt their reſpective arts, and begin to practiſe them, and earn money, it is intended that the Blind ſhall enter into an aſſociation for the relief of themſelves and families when diſabled by ſickneſs or age, in the nature of the MARINE SOCIETY, and the FRIENDLY SOCIETIES, which are found ſo uſeful in various parts of the kingdom, and from all which aſſociations they are at preſent excluded.

Some PARTICULARS *relative to a* PLAN, *&c.*

I. That an advertiſement be put into the Liverpool papers to call the indigent Blind together, to aſk which of them will accept the offer, and to diſtribute them into claſſes of learners of muſic, learners of mechanic arts, and ſuch as are diſqualified for any art.

II. That ſeveral rooms be engaged; one for the Blind inſtructed in muſic, the reſt for thoſe who are taught the other arts.

III. That thoſe be ſelected who are likely to learn muſic in ſuch a degree, as may qualify them to become organiſts, and to teach muſic.

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IV. That ſpinets be hired during one quarter, proportional to the number taught, for them to practiſe upon at their own houſes, and a harpſicord be bought for the room in which they are taught ;—after the firſt quarter, that ſpinets be purchaſed for as many as are found capable of making a proficiency, to be lent them till they have learnt their art, and then to be given them.

V. That when they are thoroughly inſtructed in muſic, and begin to gain a livelihood by it, they have a ſuit of clothes and decent linen given them.

VI. That ſome perſon, who lives in the ſame family with the Blind, be taught to write and read muſic.

VII. That the maſters, who are ſo generous as to offer their labour gratis, be paid ſomething for their trouble ; and it is hoped that that pay will increaſe, when the good effects of the inſtitution are ſeen.

VIII. That the muſical pupils be likewiſe taught ſome mechanic employment, as an agreeable variety, and that they may acquire ſomething during the time they are learning muſic.

IX. That a certain number of the blind learn church muſic, that they may be engaged and recompenſed as ſingers at St. John's Church ; and that at the end of the firſt two years, a ſermon be preached, and continued annually, for the ſupport of the charity :—when the blind muſicians and ſingers will diſplay to their benefactors, the public, their muſical proficiency.

X. That after the firſt half year there be a public exhibition of all the Blind employed in their ſeveral mechanic occupations, and afterwards, that this exhibition be annual ; and at the ſame time a collection be made for the ASSOCIATION-BOX, mentioned art. xiv—The firſt exhibition to be on Monday June 13th, and to continue the following fortnight.

XI. That the Blind be ſupplied with work by the managers of the inſtitution ; who are to pay to each blind artificer the whole gains ariſing from his labour.

XII. That the moſt diligent receive rewards, as an encouragement, ſuch as clothes, &c.

XIII. That prayers be compoſed for the uſe of the blind, adapted to their peculiar ſituation ; that they be taught theſe prayers and their duty every Saturday ; and on Sunday, that thoſe of the eſtabliſhment go to St. John's, where ſeats will be provided for them ; and thoſe who diſſent from it, go in a body to their reſpective places of public worſhip.

XIV. That after learning their trades ſix months, the Blind be incorporated into a ſociety each of whom is to contribute two-pence weekly from his gains, as a proviſion for himſelf in old age or ſickneſs ; that he may, when 60 years old, or diſabled by diſeaſe, receive three or four ſhillings weekly, in proportion as the Aſſociation-box will afford. To increaſe this fund for age and infirmity, Gentlemen will be ſolicited to become members of this BLIND FRIENDLY SOCIETY ; which, it is hoped, will exhibit a model to ſhame into frugality, induſtry, and prudence, thoſe lazy poor, who enjoy the ſenſe of ſeeing, and the uſe of all their other organs in full perfection, and yet chooſe meanly to live on common alms.

XV. That an annual report be made of the expenditure of the money, and the good effected during the year ; and that when the Inſtitution is eſtabliſhed and found beneficial, the plan when corrected, and amended by experience, be publiſhed, to produce imitation in other places.

XVI. That the money collected be lodged in a bank, and ſecured to the public by appointing Truſtees.

From the whole it will be ſeen, that the Eſtabliſhment is intended to afford relief to all;—to the youngeſt, as ſoon as they can learn muſic, which may perhaps be at about nine years of age ;—to the middle-aged, by teaching them ſome art by which to entertain their minds, and to gain an honeſt living ;—and to the old who are unable to learn any thing, by affording them ſome aſſiſtance in clothes, money, &c.—and that one great object of this Inſtitution is, to attend to the morals of the blind of all ages, eſpecially the young.

Liverpool,
December 1ſt, 1790. }

H. DANNETT.

P. S. Since the propoſal of this Plan, fifty-two blind Poor, of each ſex, have been engaged in different branches of manufacture, and earn weekly from three to ſix ſhillings each, and appear very happy in their new method of ſpending their time. They ſeem to excel in every art to which they have applied. Sixteen are employed in making hunting, jockey, and lady's whips, which are ſold for the benefit of the Charity: Fifteen blind women ſpin linen yarn, and reel it; one nearly blind warps and weaves it; another, totally blind from infancy cuts out the cloth into ſhirts and ſheets, and makes it up: Four blind girls and a boy learn to play upon the harpſicord: Two make woollen mops: Eight old blind people pick oakum for caulking of Ships: Six make baſkets and hampers, and cover bottles with wicker for exportation.

There is great reaſon to hope that a neighbouring town will follow the example;—a town which enjoys peculiar advantages in her manufactures for giving employment to the indigent Blind; and it is expected that the town alluded to and Liverpool will divide the blind Poor of the county of Lancaſter.

It is much to be wiſhed that theſe inſtitutions may become general. Almoſt every ſhire in the Kingdom has one or two capital towns, which may eaſily diſcover local and peculiar branches of manufacture to employ all the blind of each county;—indeed baſket-making, mop-making, ſpinning of yarn, knitting, muſic, &c. may ſuit every county.—And thus a claſs of our fellow-citizens, who have hitherto been only burdenſome to their friends, and unhappy becauſe unemployed, may be rendered uſeful members of Society, and made happy in themſelves by being relieved from extreme poverty, and (what is worſe than poverty) that languor and tædium vitæ, which muſt, at moſt hours, infeſt minds that are vacant, or employed only in brooding over their own misfortunes.

A handſome ſum has been raiſed to carry the ſcheme into execution, but ſtill inadequate to the extenſiveneſs of the plan, without the further aſſiſtance of the affluent and humane.

Thoſe, who may approve of the deſign, and wiſh to befriend it, are requeſted to ſend their donations to the Rev. H. Dannett, Miniſter of St. John's, Liverpool, Treaſurer for the Charity.

Names of BENEFACTORS.

	£.	s.	d.
Miſs Bold	100	0	0
Mr. Aſheton	5	5	0
Mr. Watt	5	5	0
Mr. Sutton	10	10	0
Mrs. Dawſon	10	10	0
Rev. John Yates	4	4	0
Mr. Caſſon	10	0	0
Mr. France	4	4	0
Mr. Sparling	21	0	0
Mr. Peter Hope	5	5	0
Mr. Banks	14	14	0
Mr. Waterſworth	5	5	0
Mrs. Waterſworth	5	5	0
Meſſrs. J. & T. Hodgſon	4	4	0
Mrs. Williamſon	4	4	0
Mr. Houghton	4	4	0
Rev. R. Formby	5	5	0

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